

and unostentatious. Everything about Colby struck me as a little less than expected — slighter of build, softer of voice, lower in key. He gave a pat little talk about how covert activities had sprung from the cold war, tapered off with détente, but were still necessary as a capability. I interrupted to say that I could not see him doing himself any harm by saying these things on film. He shrugged. "Okay." A moment later we were on our way down in the elevator past stunned CIA officers for the first filmed interview with the director of Central Intelligence.

The interview gave some sense of how the agency was absorbing the damage of the revelations about the operation in Chile. "So, as a professional," I concluded, "you pick up the pieces and go on?" "It's part of the hazard of the profession," he replied, playing perfectly the laconic role of the intelligence professional.

We assembled a two-part "enterpriser" on the CIA and its covert operations; they ran on the Cronkite show on October 17 and 18 to warm approval by the CBS producers.

Two months later Sy Hersh broke a new story. It disclosed that during the 1960s the CIA had maintained files and conducted surveillance over antiwar protestors and left-wing groups. I read the piece at breakfast and called Hersh to congratulate him. He said he had been working on it for two years. A few minutes later I had a call from my office saying that I should immediately pursue the surveillance story.

Our coverage was, at first, the cliché of predictable reactions — those in Congress who should have known stating indignantly that they had not known, the CIA saying it wouldn't say anything, the White House announcing that President Ford had called for a report. Within two days, however, the story took an unpredictable turn. On the morning of December 24, the word spread from the CIA that James Angleton, chief of counterintelligence, had resigned. The improper surveillance program had been under his jurisdiction — the implication seemed obvious.

Routed out of bed by a call from my office, I looked in the telephone book for Angleton, whom I had never heard of before, and drove to his home in North Arlington, Virginia. Cameras were al-

ready staked out on his lawn, but no one had tried to ascertain if he was home. My ring was answered by a groggy-looking, stoop-shouldered man in pajamas, who pointed at the *Washington Post* on his doorstep, on which I was standing, and said, "I certainly didn't expect you, Mr. Schorr, to trample on the press!" Encouraged by the recognition and the good humor, I asked if I could come in. "Well, I've been up all night," he said, "and my family is away, but I can offer you apple juice or Sanka."

Whatever the home of a chief counterspy is supposed to look like, this one resembled the home of a somewhat disorderly professor. Strewn about were books in many languages, mementos of Italy and Israel, worn rugs, pictures of his wife and two children. He agreed to talk to me, but not before the camera because he would be in mortal danger if recognized. For the next four hours — interrupted by telephone conversations in English, French, Italian and a "Shalom" for someone at the Israeli Embassy — he rambled discursively about a worldwide Communist conspiracy, managed by the Soviet KGB, which had lulled the West into believing in fictitious splits in the Communist camp. "The Nixon-Kissinger détente bothers me deeply," he said. Each time I asked him about improper CIA activities in the United States, he went off on further elaboration of his cold war theories. When I tried to bring him back to a question put fifteen minutes earlier, he said, "I am not known as a linear thinker, Mr. Schorr. You will have to let me approach your question my way."

Angleton painted the Palestinian Arab nationalists as pawns of a Communist conspiracy. He made a great point of having recognized, in a photograph, the escort of Yasser Arafat on a visit to Lenin's tomb in Moscow as an important KGB officer. Strewn through his recital were hints that Angleton's trouble with his agency had stemmed not from any CIA activity in this country, but from an internal conflict over the Middle East. For twenty-two years, as a sideline to his counterintelligence work, Angleton had taken personal charge of the "Israeli account."\* He had plucked that "ac-

\*Intelligence personnel, who like to call their agency "the Company," and its agents abroad "assets," also refer to cooperating intelligence services as "accounts" — as part of the jocular notion that they are all engaged in business.



count" from the pro-Arab Middle East Division, but lately had observed a growing pro-Arab drift in his agency, for which he blamed Kissinger. On Kissinger's request, Colby had canceled a trip to disputed East Jerusalem, during a visit to Israel, in order to avoid offending the Arabs. Angleton had rebuked Colby for yielding to Kissinger and thus offending the Israelis. It was then that Colby had called in Angleton, taken away the "Israeli account," and told him that it was time to prepare for "new leadership" in the counterintelligence office.

Colby had also casually mentioned that Angleton would be implicated in an impending Hersh exposé of the domestic surveillance activities. In fact, though the program had nominally come under Angleton's authority, it had been handled by his deputy, Richard Ober, reporting directly to Helms. Angleton, who had witnessed enough agency intrigues to understand when he had become the object of one, was ready to retire quietly — staying on the payroll for a time as a "consultant" in line with the usual CIA practice of easing the pain of ejection and minimizing hazardous resentments. The leak of his resignation two days after the *Times* story had made him appear the culprit of the spying on Americans. The episode sounded like material for a John Le Carré novel about the faithful spy thrown to the wolves to spare the headquarters embarrassment.

Angleton voiced no open complaint about his treatment, but he defended Helms who, he said, had only started keeping files on Americans because of presidential instructions. "Helms was deeply victimized," said Angleton. "He was set up as a scapegoat for Nixon."

It was now noon, and Angleton, still in pajamas, excused himself to dress, saying he had to go to the office. He repeated that he could never allow himself to be photographed, and I cautioned that he could hardly avoid being glimpsed by the cameras still waiting on his lawn. He shrugged, donned his diplomat-style black coat and fedora, walked out the front door and slowly across the lawn, then stopped directly in front of the three network cameras as though hypnotized. In some haste I picked up our microphone lying on the ground. Four hours of Angleton views were in my mind, but not on film.

"Why did you resign?" I asked.

"I think the time comes to all men when they no longer serve their countries."

"As determined by whom?"

"By themselves and their superiors."

Another reporter asked, "Did you jump or were you pushed?"

"I wasn't pushed out the window," said Angleton cryptically, recalling heaven-knew-what covert operation somewhere back in his thirty years as a secret agent. And then the nonlinear thinker, his cover and career blown, stumbled into his blue Mercedes, looking back with a dazed smile as his car left the driveway.

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The disclosure that America's foreign intelligence agency had brought home its bag of espionage tricks to practice against Americans dissidents caused a public stir in a way that a covert operation against a distant South American regime had not. It twinged the Watergate-traw "invasion of liberties" nerve that the Ford administration had been trying to assuage. Most jarring to President Ford, who was on a skiing holiday in Vail, Colorado, was that he had not known about the CIA improprieties. He demanded of the agency an immediate explanation. Colby needed only to put a covering letter on a report of the CIA's own inspector general, which had been withheld from the White House for more than two years. Six pages long, with voluminous annexes, it was ready two days later, on Christmas eve. It contained nothing about Angleton, who was being fingered for the press that morning as though he were the central figure.

Colby wrote, "Dear Mr. President: This report is in response to your comments on the *New York Times* article of December 22nd alleging CIA involvement in a 'massive' domestic intelligence effort . . ." The burden of the CIA's red-faced defense was that it had not been "massive."

Colby gave the report to Secretary Kissinger, who was flying out to Vail, and also told Kissinger of some other activities that the agency had never before confided to the secretary or to the White